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## Army Corps OKS pact for LBI Project

*From Press staff reports*

A long-awaited project to replenish Long Beach Island's beaches took a major step forward Wednesday, said U.S. Rep. Jim Saxton, R-3rd.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters in Washington has approved the Project Cooperation Agreement, or PCA, between New Jersey and the federal government, Saxton said in a news release.

"This is yet another big step for the long-term plan to repair and project LBI beaches, homes, businesses and public property," he said. "Without the PCA, the project cannot advance. I expect a formal signing of the PCA by the parties in the next few weeks." Saxton said he expects bids for the project to be sought soon after that.

"Work - actual moving of sand - could begin along some parts of the island as early as year's end," he said.

Saxton said he met Wednesday with the head of the corps, Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, to thank the Corps and its Philadelphia District for their efforts to push the project ahead.

In 1962 a powerful storm caused an estimated \$100 million damage, in today's dollars, to 1,200 homes and businesses on the 17-mile-long island, according to the Saxton release. Potential damage from a similar storm today would be significantly greater because the island is far more populated.

Saxton secured more than \$3 million in federal funds from 1993 to 2003 to design and engineer a repair plan, and \$1.7 million toward future construction in 2004-2005.

In May he added another \$5 million for construction to the House of Representatives' version of the 2006 federal budget - enough to begin the first phase of construction. The money later was also included in the Senate version of the budget. Final passage is expected in the fall, the release said.

The island has more than 8,000 residents who are at risk of hurricanes and northeasters, Saxton said.

"Finally there is light at the end of the tunnel," he said. "We will be able to begin repairing the beaches from multiple storms of the 1990s."

Three storms in unusual succession between early 1991 and late 1992 resulted in severe erosion. The project is designed to repair that damage.

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